

Abstract 308

TITLE: Improving Access and Quality of HIV Prevention Services to New York State (NYS) Inmates Through the Criminal Justice Initiative (CJI)

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ISSUE: Each year approximately 150,000 individuals in NYS, many with histories of injection drug use or sexual risk behaviors, pass through 73 correctional facilities. NYS's correctional system has one of the highest HIV seroprevalance rates nationally; 10% of male and 16% of female entrants are HIV infected. AIDS is the leading cause of death among NYS inmates. Those providing HIV prevention and support services in correctional settings face significant challenges.

SETTING: Over 60 NYS correctional facilities served by the CJI.

PROJECT: The CJI is an innovative collaboration involving three NYS government agencies and ten community based organizations. Within existing resources, this project strives to meet the continuum of HIV prevention and supportive service needs of inmates and parolees.

RESULTS: During the first six months of 1998, nearly 22,000 inmates received HIV prevention education, 12,000 were voluntarily tested for HIV, over 2,000 participated in one-to-one and group support services, and about 700 inmates received transitional planning. Over 90% of those served were minority. HIV prevention education was offered at 61 facilities, peer education training at 41, anonymous counseling and testing services at 36, supportive services at 48, transitional planning for HIV positive inmates at 61, and hotline services offer transitional planning at all facilities. Confidential counseling, testing and medical care is provided at all facilities. Case management and a full range of supportive services for HIV positive parolees are widely available.

LESSONS LEARNED: Peer delivered services can be established as an effective method for inmate/parolee education. Improved cooperation and coordination between state agencies and community-based organizations is possible. This can significantly enhance provision of HIV prevention and support services and maximize resources. Focus groups, surveys program data and evaluation strategies can enable continuous assessment.

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